

March 11, 2002

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OLYMPIC REGION

Mr. Gordon Gibbs  
SEPA Responsible Official  
411 Tillicum Lane  
Forks, WA 98331

Re Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Surface Mine Expansion of Mats Mats Quarry. Reclamation Permit No. 70-010170

Dear Mr. Gibbs:

We are strongly opposed to the proposed, expanded mining operations at the Mats Mats Quarry. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) concludes in nearly every element that there are or will be no adverse impacts of the mine expansion, which generally appears to consist of blasting 9 million tons of rock and backfilling 7 million yards of soil over a 23-year period. Virtually no substantive mitigation is offered. To conclude that a project of this scope and magnitude will have no significant impacts and require no mitigation stretches credibility of the applicant and the entire DEIS.

The technical analysis does not, in many cases, support the conclusion of no adverse impacts. The terms "should", "may", "could", and "possible" are frequently used in the DEIS. A determination of impacts requires a higher level of analysis than provided in this DEIS. In particular, the potential effects on groundwater, marine waters and Endangered Species Act salmonoids lacks sufficient detail to determine the potential for significant impacts. Blasting, fractures, seepage and water chemistry need to be addressed in greater detail to demonstrate that the applicant can meet applicable water quality regulations and prevent impacts to off-site beneficial uses.

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Water usage is another major concern. The applicant states that water will be used for dust control and wash-down operations. The applicant, however, does not state the source of this water. They have indicated that they have "applied" for water rights. This does not guarantee that they will have a sufficient water supply to perform the mining operations and keep dust to a minimum. The president of our local community water system (Olympus Beach Tracts) told us that the system is currently supplying water for one toilet at the quarry. Our community water system was designed to support the local residences and not supply water for this magnitude of mining operations.

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Specific concerns why the mining should not be expanded include:

1. Blasting in the quarry is a major nuisance. The concussion from current blasts jars our home, which is located at the head of the Mats Mats Bay. Past explosions have spewn rocks and dirt across the entrance of the bay onto private homes. The DEIS (page S-10) assures "near zero probability of structural damage to residences constructed according to the Uniform Building Code." The UBC is consistently evolving based on new technologies and better understandings of causes and affects, thus providing more stringent requirements for newer construction. The majority of the residences in this area were built before the stringent requirements went into effect. The DEIS does not

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indicate which edition of the UBC they have considered which would seek to absolve their responsibility for causing structural damages to our homes.

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2. Salt water intrusion into the aquifer and existing wells is a major concern. The amount of blasting required to break the basalt rock into manageable sizes will undoubtedly open up cracks and crevices and allow salt water to intrude into the aquifer and subsequently end up in our wells. Or, it may alter the aquifer level and our wells could dry up. This is a potential significant adverse impact and has not been adequately assessed.

3. The residue from blasting could be hazardous depending on the type of blasting used. This could leave behind an abundance of phosphates and nitrates which could seep into the aquifer and again into our wells. This could also seep back into the Puget Sound where it could be harmful to the fish and wildlife. This is a significant adverse impact and has not been adequately addressed.

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4. Once the excavation begins and the pit deepens, there is a great potential for the stock piles to slide or collapse into the pit from the shock of additional blasting or from erosion.

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5. The plan is to backfill the pit with the tailings that are now present and that will be created during the expanded mining operations, as well as imported fill material. The amount of fines (silt) could have a significant adverse impact on the quality of the surrounding water. Because of the blasting, cracks and crevasses could be created and allow the water in the pit to escape into the Sound and threaten the fish and marine life. This could affect the local beaches north and south of the mine because of tidal actions. This could also flow into Mats Mats Bay, endangering the marine life there. Additionally, because Mats Mats Bay is quite shallow and has very limited tidal flushing and is accessed by a very narrow channel, we are concerned that any additional silt generated by the expanded mining operations could further restrict the usage of the Bay. Because of current environmental regulations, dredging of the channel and navigable waters of the Bay would not be allowed, thus, severely impacting our usage of the Bay.

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6. The access roads into the quarry (Olympus Boulevard and Quarry Road), as well as the intersection of Olympus Boulevard at Oak Bay Road, are substandard according to AASHTO Roadway Standards. There are two approximately 10-foot wide lanes with no shoulders, tight turns and poor sight distances. The DEIS states there are shoulders, however an existing sign on Olympus Boulevard warns drivers that there are no shoulders. Additionally, the DEIS states that the road "nearly meets" minimum AASHTO standards. This roadway does not meet minimum standards (see attached AASHTO Minimum Width of Traveled Way and Shoulders) and, therefore, the reference to this in the DEIS should indicate this and not skirt this issue. According to AASHTO, a large truck takes up to 16-feet in width while making a slight turn as would occur at Olympus Boulevard and Quarry Road. Also, there is no mention in the DEIS of the condition of the roadbed. Is the existing roadbed strong enough to hold up under continued heavy truck traffic? The 55-degree angle at the intersection of Oak Bay Road and Olympus Boulevard is below the 60-degree minimum intersection angle. This item was mentioned in the DEIS and referenced AASHTO for roadway standards. Please refer to the actual AASHTO Intersection Design standards, attached. Turning trucks cannot make this turn without encroaching into oncoming lanes and even onto the shoulder on the opposite side of Oak Bay Road. School buses do not attempt to make this turn and instead turn left and then turn around in the Fire Station parking lot in order to continue their travel north on Oak Bay Road. Sight distance is also a major issue at this intersection. Again,

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the DEIS indicates their compliance based on AASHTO minimum standards. The DEIS indicates a 457-foot sight distance is allowed under AASHTO. The actual AASHTO Design Standards state the minimum sight distance for trucks is 680-feet for left turning traffic and 620-feet for right turning traffic. A copy of this standard is attached. The actual sight distance at this intersection is 480-feet for left turning traffic and 420-feet for right turning traffic. Additionally, many local individuals regularly walk Olympus Boulevard down to the Mats Mats Boat Launch. The combination of pedestrians and large trucks on this road with no shoulders poses a deadly mix. This is a significant adverse impact and was not evaluated in the DEIS.

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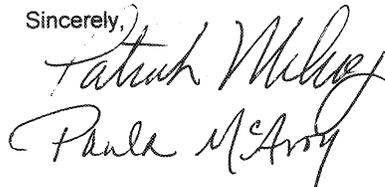
7. The affect on endangered salmon are not sufficiently addressed. A complete biological evaluation is needed to determine whether this project will result in a "take" under the Endangered Species Act. As written, the filling and dredging of the barge operations would likely have a significant adverse impact on salmon and other marine species.

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8. The DEIS does not address where the water will come from to serve the wetting down and washing operations at the site. As mentioned previously, this item needs to be addressed.

In summary, the proposed expansion project is definitely a significant impact to our community, yet the applicant offers no mitigation. The ultimate site use is also not fully addressed. There are far too many negative impacts to the local environment that would result from the expanded mining operations. While Glacier Northwest can profit and subsequently leave this area, we, the residents who have owned our homes here for many years must contend and live with the significant adverse impacts from this operation. Additional analysis and definite plans for mitigation are necessary before this proposal should be considered.

Sincerely,



Patrick & Paula McAvoy  
50 Carey Court  
Port Ludlow, WA 98365

Enclosure

Copy to:  
Glenn Huntingford, Jefferson County Commissioner  
Al Scalf, Jefferson County Dept. of Community Development  
Rae Belkin, Mats Mats Coalition Coordinator  
WASHINGTON DEPT. OF ECOLOGY, ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW SECTION

## Response to Letter 29

MCAVOY, PATRIC AND PAULA

1. Comment acknowledged. Please refer to Response of Letter 7 (Mats Mats Area Coalition – March 7), comment 17 for a discussion on SEPA terminology. Please refer to the *Groundwater* section of this Final EIS for a discussion on potential impacts to off-site wells.
2. Comment acknowledged. The sources of fresh water utilized for dust control on the quarry site include retained stormwater and a shallow on-site well. Adequate water for dust control and other quarry operations (including one toilet and one sink at the office) is available from these on-site sources. Water from the Olympus Beach Tracts system has not and would not be utilized for quarry operations.
3. Only one flyrock incident has been verified. This incident involved a small piece of rock that landed on a neighbor's deck. With regard to structure age and susceptibility to vibrations, the relationship between peak particle velocity, frequency, and potential included in the Washington State Blasting Regulations (WAC-296-52) for structural damage was developed from studies on structures constructed prior to 1977.
4. Please refer to Response to Letter 4 (Jefferson County), comments 31 and 43, and the *Surface Water* section of this Final EIS.
5. Contaminants such as nitrates and phosphates could occur at elevated concentrations in the stormwater and mine water collected at the base of the quarry. Potential impacts associated with surface water quality are discussed in the *Groundwater* section and *Appendix XIII* of this Final EIS. Minimal amounts, if any, of the ponded stormwater or mine water located at elevations lower than mean sea level would infiltrate into the underlying basalt aquitard based on (1) the quarry being located in an area of groundwater discharge, and (2) the extremely low hydraulic conductivity of the intact basalt. Nearby offsite supply wells south of the site are not located in a downgradient direction relative to likely groundwater flow directions, and the multiple basalt flows located between the southern mine limits and the offsite wells provide an effective hydraulic barrier. Any water that does infiltrate into the basalt at the base of the pit would not flow towards the offsite supply wells. Refer to the *Groundwater* section and *Appendix I* of this Final EIS for additional discussion concerning potential impacts to offsite supply wells and propose mitigation measures. Sampling of the proposed ground water monitoring wells for nitrate is included in the revised ground water monitoring program (*Appendix IX* of this Final EIS) for the purpose of identifying any trends in nitrate concentrations that could potentially be associated with the use of explosives during future mining operations.
6. Comment acknowledged. Existing and proposed mining and reclamation operations would continue to be designed and phased to minimize the potential for slide, collapse or erosion of stockpiles into the quarry. All site operations would be conducted according to applicable mining safety regulations.

7. There has not been any observed direct discharge of water into water that originated from the interior of the mine and flowed towards the marine water via fractures that resulted from mine operations. Water accumulating in the mine backfill material after reclamation is complete would likely follow similar subsurface hydraulic pathways through the surrounding intact bedrock that existed prior to mining at the site. There are no identified potential adverse impacts associated with the eventual subsurface discharge of groundwater from the site into surrounding marine water.
8. The only two avenues of sediment introduction to Mats Mats Bay from the existing quarry are airborne deposition of dust and discharge during mining and discharge of stormwater and dewatering water after treatment. Tidal exchange likely continues to release sediment from the upper slip that was used as a sediment trap prior to Glacier's acquisition of the property. As indicated in the Draft EIS and the Response to Letter 7 (Mats Mats Area Coalition – March 7), comment 64, airborne dust accumulations in Mats Mats Bay would total less than 5/100ths of an inch even if the mine were to operate for 100 years. Discharge from the mine, following the upgrades to the stormwater system instituted by Glacier Northwest, Inc. after their acquisition of the property in 1995, has been compliant with NPDES General Permit discharge requirements, and is thus not a significant source of sediment to Mats Mats Bay that could impede navigation. Please also refer to Response to Letter 3 (OAPCA), comment 1.
9. Quarry truck traffic has been using the area roadways and intersections for decades. The cited acute angle intersection was constructed in the 1930's, and has safely conducted traffic since that time. Volumes on Oak Bay Road and Olympus Blvd. are low enough that trucks and other vehicles can maneuver safely, despite the acute angle of the intersection.

AASHTO is a reference document, and does not set standards. The document is used primarily for designing roadways, not for determining impacts. For instance, if a new development resulted in increased traffic to levels that exceed service standards, the County or State might require a pro rata share rebuilding of the Oak Bay Road/Olympus Boulevard intersection (pro rata share only, or the percentage of total intersection traffic related to the land use in question). In that case, roadway designers would reference AASHTO for an optimum intersection design. However, the *Proposed Action* does not add additional traffic to area roadways, and no significant impacts result from the continued use of the quarry.
10. The existing roadways in the area are structurally sound and are capable continued handling traffic volumes identified in the EIS. As under current conditions, periodic road maintenance would be required.
11. Please refer to response to comment 9 of this letter.
12. Please see discussion under comment 9 of this letter. The project does not add additional traffic to area roadways, and so no impacts occur. Because no significant traffic impacts were identified, no mitigation can be required under SEPA. Also, there have been no reported accidents related to quarry traffic (refer to response to Letter 22, Funke, William, comment 4). The entering sight distance may not be the optimum, but operates sufficiently for local traffic conditions - no accidents have occurred related to the sight distance, or involving quarry truck traffic.

Measurable traffic impacts must be related to locally adopted standards. The *Proposed Action* adds no new traffic in the study area (or even beyond the study area). Even if there were some demonstrable impact related to the proposal (related to locally adopted standards), any mitigation would be pro rata share only. Under SEPA, mitigation can only be required for impacts directly related to a specific action, and then, only to the degree that the project impacts the facility. If this were a brand new quarry, and the existing intersection was found to be inadequate (by local standards) to carry that traffic, then the property owners would be responsible for their pro rata share of the improvement. Truck traffic from the quarry represents approximately 1% of area intersection traffic.

13. Comment acknowledged. Please refer to Response to Letter 7 (Mats Mats Area Collation – March 7), comment 12 for a discussion on roadway safety.
14. Please refer to Response to Letter 2 (Department of Fish and Wildlife), comment 7.